

April 24, 2021

Good afternoon co-chairs and members of the committee. My name is Lori Silverman and I am on the board of directors for Serendipity Center. I am here to ask for an investment of \$2.8 million dollars to help fund a facility expansion.

As a former school district special education director, I have first hand knowledge of the services that Serendipity provides to some of our most vulnerable students and their families. Serendipity Center is a critical community resource for children living with disability and trauma.

Serendipity Center is a non-profit therapeutic school that serves students from over 20 school districts, and is a one of a kind school that blends special education and mental health services in a seamless model. The students who attend Serendipity have educational and mental health needs that make traditional school environments an unsuccessful option. These students are typically impacted by trauma and have behaviors that compromise the safety of themselves and others. Serendipity provides a safe, trauma informed environment with highly trained teams that offers an option for students when their public school system cannot meet their needs.

Serendipity Center operates at capacity every year and maintains a waiting list. This means that children are not in school if they can't attend Serendipity. This is not good for children, their families or the community. The Covid 19 pandemic and the stressors experienced by the families and children will bring unprecedented challenges to Oregon schools which are unprepared to meet this increase in significant needs. We anticipate increased referrals from districts for school placements.

I urge you to invest in Serendipity! This investment will increase student capacity at the school, create an equitable school option and integrate trauma-informed practices for children. The expansion will benefit the entire region by supporting a strong standard for best practices in therapeutic education and increasing enrollment for children with significant needs.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Lori Silverman  
503-830-7093